

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-14 ISO-00 PA-02 H-02
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SP-02 SS-15 SSO-00 INRE-00 SAA-01 SES-02 /099 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/P:REUNDELAND:DP

APPROVED BY NEA/P:GFSHERMAN

PA/PRESS - MR. CARTER

H - MR. FLATEN

SSM - MR. MC ANDREW

NEA/IAI - MR. KORN

NEA/ARN - MR. HOWELL

NEA/EGY - MR. MARTHINSEN

NEA/ARP - MR. TWINAM

-----012955 300302Z /64

O 292156Z AUG 78

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY SANA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION SINAI

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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USMISSION USNATO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
SECDEF WASHDC 0000
JCS WASHDC 0000
CIA WASHDC 0000
USICA WASHDC
NSC WASHDC 0000
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS POUCH

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CINCEUR FOR POLAD; TEL AVIV FOR PAO, DELIVER BY 9 A.M.

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: SOPN

SUBJECT:DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - AUGUST 29, 1978

1. FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS
FROM DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING FOR AUGUST 29. OFFICER
PRESENT TODAY WAS KEN BROWN.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING ON THE ISRAELI REQUESTS, AS
REPORTED TODAY, THAT THE UNITED STATES INFORM SYRIA OF THE
ISRAELI CONCERN OVER ATTACKS ON CHRISTIAN VILLAGES IN
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NORTHERN LEBANON?

A. I HAVE NOTHING SPECIFIC ON SUCH A REQUEST.

Q. HAVE THE ISRAELIS REQUESTED THIS TO YOUR KNOWLEDGE?

A. I AM NOT INFORMED OF IT.

Q. HAVE THE ISRAELIS REQUESTED ANYTHING SPECIFIC WITH
REGARD TO THE SITUATION IN LEBANON, BOTH BEIRUT AND THE
NORTHERN VILLAGES?

A. I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING ON SPECIFIC REQUESTS. HOWEVER,

LET ME REVIEW FOR YOU OUR POSITION ON THE SITUATION
THERE, AND PERHAPS THAT WILL SATISFY SOME OF YOUR LINE OF
INQUIRY.

WE HAVE STATED REPEATEDLY THAT THE CENTRAL AIM OF THE
UNITED STATES' POLICY IN LEBANON IS TO HELP RE-ESTABLISH
CONDITIONS OF PEACE AND STABILITY THERE THROUGH EXTENDING
THE AUTHORITY OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OF PRESIDENT

SARKIS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

WE DO NOT CONDONE VIOLENCE ON ANY SIDE IN THIS TRAGIC SITUATION. IT CAUSES NEEDLESS SUFFERING, TAKES INNOCENT VICTIMS AND HAMPERS EFFORTS TO RETURN PEACE AND STABILITY TO LEBANON.

BOTH PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY WE CONTINUE TO URGE MAXIMUM RESTRAINT IN ALL QUARTERS.

Q. HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO ARMS SHIPMENTS INTO LEBANON?

A. THIS WOULD BE INCLUDED UNDER THE RUBRIC OF RESTRAINT.

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Q. IT DOESN'T SEEM TO AFFECT YOUR ASKING THE ISRAELIS TO STOP SUPPLYING ARMS TO THE MARONITES.

A. I CAN'T GO INTO SPECIFICS AS TO WHAT IS INCLUDED. BUT WE ARE TALKING ABOUT RESTRAINT IN THE SITUATION; WE ARE TALKING ABOUT AVOIDANCE OF PUBLIC RHETORIC THAT MIGHT EMBITTER THE SITUATION.

Q. COULD YOU ADDRESS THE QUESTION ABOUT THE STATEMENTS BY MINISTER ALLON AND MR. ARENS SAYING THAT ISRAEL WOULD INTERVENE AGAIN IF THE SYRIANS ATTACKED THE CHRISTIAN MARONITES?

A. WE ARE FOLLOWING EVENTS CLOSELY. WE ARE DOING EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO SUPPORT THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT IN ITS EFFORTS TO RE-ESTABLISH PEACE AND STABILITY IN THE COUNTRY. WE ARE IN CONTINUING CONTACT THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS WITH ALL QUARTERS WITH A ROLE IN LEBANON OR WITH INFLUENCE ON THE SITUATION TO URGE MAXIMUM RESTRAINT. WE REMAIN IN ACTIVE CONTACT WITH THE UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER GOVERNMENTS ABOUT SUPPORTING PRESIDENT SARKIS' GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS.

I NOTED A MINUTE AGO THAT WE BELIEVE THAT ALL SIDES SHOULD

REFRAIN FROM PUBLIC RHETORIC WHICH MIGHT EMBITTER THE SITUATION. WE CONSIDER THE CAMP DAVID MEETING THE BEST OPPORTUNITY TO DATE FOR WORKING OUT AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL THE FRAMEWORK FOR NEGOTIATING A SETTLEMENT OF THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT, AND WE ARE DETERMINED TO DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO MAKE THAT MEETING A SUCCESS.

Q. WHEN YOU SAY YOU ARE DOING EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO
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HELP THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT RESTORE PEACE AND STABILITY,
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

A. WHAT I SAID WAS THAT WE CONTINUE OUR CONTACT THROUGH
DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS TO TRY TO REINFORCE THE AUTHORITY OF
THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. WE ARE
IN ACTIVE CONTACT WITH THE UN.

BUT I CAN'T GO INTO ANYTHING BEYOND THAT. I HAVE NO
DETAILS OF ANY OTHER EFFORTS THAT MIGHT BE INVOLVED.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY CONFIRMATION OR REBUTTALS TO THE
VARIOUS REPORTS THAT HAVE BEEN COMING FOR SEVERAL WEEKS
TO THE EFFECT THAT ISRAEL IS SUPPLYING ARMS, NOT NECESSARILY
OF U.S.-ORIGIN, TO THE MARONITES?

A. I HAVE NO INFORMATION ON THAT.

Q. YOU ARE TALKING OF RESTRAINT AND AVOIDING RHETORIC,
AND SO ON, AND IN ALMOST THE SAME BREATH YOU SAY THAT
CAMP DAVID IS THE BEST OPPORTUNITY TO WORK OUT A FRAME-
WORK FOR PEACE. ARE YOU SUGGESTING THAT THE UNITED STATES
IS CONCERNED THAT DEVELOPMENTS IN LEBANON MAY TORPEDO
CAMP DAVID?

A. NO, I'M NOT SAYING THAT. I AM SAYING THAT NOW IS
THE TIME FOR PUBLIC RESTRAINT IN TERMS OF RHETORIC, AND
RESTRAINT ON THE GROUND IN TERMS OF ANY ACTIVITIES THAT
MIGHT MAKE THE SITUATION WORSE.

Q. ARE YOU SAYING THAT LEBANON WOULD BE ONE OF THE ISSUES
AT CAMP DAVID, OR WHY DID YOU PUT THAT IN THERE IN THAT
CONTEXT?

A. I'M NOT REALLY GOING INTO THE AGENDA FOR CAMP DAVID.

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Q. WHAT HAS CAMP DAVID TO DO WITH THE SITUATION IN
LEBANON?

A. I THINK CAMP DAVID HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE OVER-
ALL SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST, INCLUDING LEBANON.

Q. LEBANON IS NOT PART OF THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT,

IS IT?

A. IT DEPENDS ON HOW YOU DEFINE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT.

Q. TELL ME, IS THE UNITED STATES WORRIED IN ANY WAY THAT WHILE THE ISRAELI LEADERSHIP IS HELD PRISONER IN CAMP DAVID, SYRIA MIGHT ACT IN A WAY THAT CANNOT BE CHECKED BY FORCES IN THE MIDDLE EAST?

A. WILL YOU BE SPECIFIC ABOUT WHAT YOU MEAN ABOUT SYRIAN ACTION?

Q. THERE ARE REPORTS FROM ISRAEL THAT THERE IS CONCERN OVER THERE THAT WHILE THE CAMP DAVID TALKS ARE GOING ON, SYRIA MIGHT DO SOMETHING DRASTIC OR DRAMATIC IN LEBANON; AND THAT THERE WON'T BE ANY WAY OF DEALING WITH SUCH A SITUATION, GIVEN THE WISH OF EVERYBODY TO CONDUCT NICE TALKS AT CAMP DAVID, WHEN SUDDENLY GIVEN THE ABSENCE OF DECISION-MAKERS FROM THE AREA?

A. I HAVE NO EVIDENCE OF SUCH PLANS BY THE SYRIANS. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF FACTORS IN THE SITUATION, OF COURSE, IN LEBANON THAT COULD CAUSE AN ERUPTION OF PROBLEMS, EVEN AN ERUPTION OF VIOLENCE, AT ANY TIME. THAT'S ONE OF THE REASONS THAT WE CONTINUE TO WATCH THE SITUATION CLOSELY AND CONTINUE TO URGE THE KIND OF RESTRAINT THAT I'VE BEEN UNCLASSIFIED

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TALKING ABOUT.

Q. ARE YOU SPECIFICALLY TALKING DIRECTLY TO THE SYRIANS ABOUT NOT DOING ANYTHING AS LONG AS CAMP DAVID GOES ON?

A. I CAN'T GO INTO SPECIFICS, BUT I SAID THAT WE'RE IN TOUCH WITH ALL QUARTERS, AND THAT WOULD INCLUDE THE SYRIANS.

Q. ON THE CAMP DAVID MEETING, DO YOU HAVE ANY MORE SCHEDULE INFORMATION?

A. I DO NOT.

Q. WOULD YOU COMMENT ON THE CHARGES THAT THE UNITED STATES IS TACITLY ENCOURAGING SYRIA TO DO WHAT IS IS DOING IN LEBANON?

A. I THINK I HAVE COMMENTED ON THAT. OUR POLICY IS TO TRY TO ESTABLISH THE CONDITIONS OF PEACE AND STABILITY THROUGH WHICH THE AUTHORITY OF THE SARKIS' GOVERNMENT COULD BE EXTENDED, AND WE DON'T CONDONE VIOLENCE ON ANY

SIDE.

Q. SO THE ANSWER IS NO TO THAT, OR WHAT?

A. THE ANSWER IS NO TO THAT.

Q. IS THERE ANYTHING TO ADD TODAY ON THOSE REPORTS OF AN AMERICAN MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE MID-EAST?

A. NO. I HAVE NOTHING ON THAT.

Q. HOW ABOUT METO (MIDDLE EAST TREATY ORGANIZATION) WHICH SURFACED IN THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR AGAIN YESTERDAY?
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A. I HAVE NOTHING ON THAT.

Q. CAN YOU CONFIRM THAT ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI HAS BEEN RAISING THAT IDEA?

A. I CANNOT CONFIRM IT.

Q. ALSO ON THE MIDDLE EAST, DOES THE STATE DEPARTMENT ACCEPT THE ISRAELI CHARACTERIZATION OF THE WAR IN LEBANON AS RELIGIOUS? I MEAN EVEN THE PRESENT AND THE PREVIOUS POPE HAVE SAID THAT THIS IS NOT A RELIGIOUS WAR, BUT THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT KEEPS SAYING THAT IT'S A SLAUGHTER OF CHRISTIANS. I'M JUST WONDERING IF YOU HAVE A RESPONSE TO THAT CHARACTERIZATION?

A. I'M NOT GOING TO GET INTO CHARACTERIZING IT. IT'S A DANGEROUS SITUATION THAT WE WANT TO SEE AMELIORATED.

CHRISTOPHER

NOTE BY OC/T: POUCHED TO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS.

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